

National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

Brief of Accident

Adopted 05/08/2003

DCA01MA034					
File No. 13536	03/29/2001	Aspen, CO	Aircraft Reg No. N303GA	Time (Local): 19:01 MST	
Make/Model:	Grumman / Gulfstream III		Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Rolls-Royce / Spey MK 511-8		Crew 3	0	0
Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed		Pass 15	0	0
Number of Engines:	2				
Operating Certificate(s):	On-demand Air Taxi				
Name of Carrier:	AVJET CORP				
Type of Flight Operation:	Non-scheduled; Domestic; Passenger Only				
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter				
Last Depart. Point: Los Angeles, CA			Condition of Light: Night		
Destination: Same as Accident/Incident Location			Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility		
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip			Basic Weather: Visual Conditions		
			Lowest Ceiling: 2500 Ft. AGL, Broken		
			Visibility: 10.00 SM		
			Wind Dir/Speed: 250 / 003 Kts		
			Temperature (°C): 4		
			Precip/Obscuration: Snow		
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 44		Flight Time (Hours)		
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)			Total All Aircraft: 9900		
Airline Transport; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land;			Last 90 Days: 87		
Instrument Ratings			Total Make/Model: 1475		
Airplane			Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr		

The Board's full report is available at <http://www.nts.gov/Publictn/publictn.htm> .

On March 29, 2001, about 1901:57 mountain standard time, a Gulfstream III, N303GA, owned by Airbourne Charter, Inc., and operated by Avjet Corporation of Burbank, California, crashed while on final approach to runway 15 at Aspen-Pitkin County Airport (ASE), Aspen, Colorado. The charter flight had departed Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) about 1711 with 2 pilots, 1 flight attendant, and 15 passengers. The airplane crashed into sloping terrain about 2,400 feet short of the runway threshold. All of the passengers and crewmembers were killed, and the airplane was destroyed. The flight was being operated on an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan under 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 135.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (C) MINIMUM DESCENT ALTITUDE - CONTINUED BELOW - FLIGHTCREW
3. (F) PRESSURE INDUCED BY OTHERS - OTHER PERSON
4. (F) IMPROPER DECISION - FLIGHTCREW
5. (F) INADEQUATE SURVEILLANCE, INADEQUATE PROCEDURE - FAA(ORGANIZATION)
6. (F) MATERIAL INADEQUATE - FAA(OTHER/ORGANIZATION)

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.
the flight crew's operation of the airplane below the minimum descent altitude without an appropriate visual reference for the runway.

Contributing to the cause of the accident were the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) unclear wording of the March 27, 2001, Notice to Airmen regarding the nighttime restriction for the VOR/DME-C approach to the airport and the FAA's failure to communicate this restriction to the Aspen tower; the inability of the flight crew to adequately see the mountainous terrain because of the darkness and the weather conditions; and the pressure on the captain to land from the charter customer and because of the airplane's delayed departure and the airport's nighttime landing restriction.